

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY REPORT



This report was written to show the State of Kansas Civil Service remains strong in its commitment to veterans' preference in state government employment. The information provided in this report shows that state agencies are continuing to employ veterans in the state workforce. State agencies support the hiring of qualified veterans to help them as an institution become more efficient and effective serving our customers – the citizens of Kansas. This report presents the commitment by state agencies in ensuring that actions are being taken for recruiting, training, and offering career developmental opportunities for veterans and especially veterans with disabilities.

Veterans' Preference

Since the enactment of the Kansas Civil Service Act in 1941, veterans of the Armed Forces have been given some degree of preference in appointments to state civil service jobs. Recognizing their sacrifice, the State of Kansas enacted laws to prevent veterans seeking State employment from being penalized for their time in military service. Veterans' preference recognizes the economic loss suffered by citizens who have served their country in uniform, restores veterans to a favorable competitive position for Government employment, and acknowledges the larger obligation owed to disabled veterans.

Veterans' preference is not so much a reward for being in uniform as it is a way to help make up for the economic loss suffered by those who answered the nation's call to arms. Historically, preference has been reserved by the State of Kansas for those who were either disabled or who served in combat areas. Eligible veterans receive many advantages in State employment, including preference for initial employment, promotional opportunities, and a higher retention standing in the event of layoffs. However, the veterans' preference laws do not guarantee the veteran a job. Preference does not have as its goal the placement of a veteran in every vacancy; this would be incompatible with the merit principles that are the foundation of the state's civil service.

By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns or have retired from active duty are entitled to preference over others in establishing certified lists of eligibles and also in retention during reductions in force. In 1995, the State Civil Service discontinued certified rank lists of eligibles, but required "under no circumstances shall veterans be accorded any less preference than existed prior to July 1, 1995". In 2003, the Division of Personnel Services modified K.A.R. 1-6-21 regulation requiring agencies to interview all veterans who meet minimum requirements for the class. This modification to the personnel regulations gave veterans a better opportunity to be hired into state classified civil service jobs, compared to what existed prior to 1995. In addition, it gave veterans' preference in internal agency actions such as promotion, transfer, reassignment, and reinstatement.

To receive preference, a veteran must have been **discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions.**

Who is a Veteran?

Other than the case of reduction in the force, the term “veteran” means a person who:

- Entered the armed services before October 15, 1976, and separated from the armed services under honorable conditions, if such person served:
 - On active duty during any war (the official dates for war service are April 6, 1917 through July 2, 1921, and December 7, 1941 through April 28, 1952);
 - During the period April 28, 1952 through July 1, 1955;
 - In any campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge or service medal has been authorized;
 - For more than 180 consecutive days since January 31, 1955, excluding an initial period of active duty for training under the “six month” reserve and national guard program;
- Any person who entered the armed services on or after October 15, 1976, and separated from the armed services under honorable conditions, if such person was awarded a service medal or campaign badge;
- Any person who separated from the armed services under honorable conditions and has a disability certified by the United States department of veterans affairs as being service connected, has been issued the purple heart by the United States government or has been released from active service with a service-connected disability; and
- Any person voluntarily retired with 20 or more years of active service.

In case of reductions in force, preference will be given to any veteran, any surviving spouse of a veteran, and any orphan of a veteran, where the layoff scores of those persons identified for layoff are the same score. For the purpose of layoff, the following terms are defined: "Person who served in the armed forces of the United States" means any person who served in the army, navy, air force or marine corps of the United States in world war I or world war II, and any person who served with the armed forces of the United States during the military, naval, and air operations in Korea, Vietnam or other places under the flags of the United States and the United Nations or under the flag of the United States alone.

"Veteran" means any person who served in the armed forces of the United States and who was honorably discharged or discharged under honorable conditions from the armed forces.

"Surviving spouse" means the spouse of a person who served in the armed forces of the United States and who died while in the U.S. armed forces, unless the spouse has remarried.

"Orphan" means a minor who is the child of a person who served in the armed forces of the United States and who died while serving in the U.S. armed forces.

Improving the Recruiting and Hiring of Veterans

The State's Human Resource Community continues to work to identify measures that would serve to improve the overall recruiting and hiring of veterans in the Kansas Merit System in:

- Simplifying the application process for veterans seeking jobs and agencies to hire veterans.
- Taking advantages of technological advances that enable notification to veterans on job opening and agencies to expedite the application process.
- Developing a strategic plan to increasing the efforts in attracting and hiring veterans.
- Identifying and implementing programs that help transition veterans to careers within state government.

Through a series of team meetings, recommendations from state employees, and the review of current recruitment practices and processes, we have improved the hiring process by:

- **Upgrading Systems of Vacancy Notification.**
 - ✓ We implemented an email notification system that provides veteran representatives and veteran organizations a weekly centralized vacancy list of job vacancies in the Kansas Merit System.
- **Upgrading the Application Process.**
 - ✓ We modified the Online Employment Application to allow veterans to claim veterans' preference.
 - ✓ Used veterans' applicant data for proactive recruitment strategies.
 - ✓ Will be using veterans' applicant data to measure how successful the state's programs to hire veterans are doing in increasing the hiring rate of veterans.
- **Upgrading Existing Communications.**
 - ✓ We renewed our commitment to continuously improve the overall quality of service to veterans seeking jobs.
 - ✓ Trained Department of Commerce veteran representatives on the State's veterans' preference.
- **Upgrading Recruitment Strategies.**
 - ✓ Held Career Fairs and Applicant Workshops that focus on hiring veterans.
 - ✓ State's Diversity Network and Recruiters Network Teams have incorporate "veterans" into their recruitment strategies and approaches.

NEW PROGRAMS:



As part of the effort to hire veterans, the State of Kansas entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Helmets to Hardhats program to work cooperatively to assist returning serviceman and servicewomen find employment within state government in the construction trades. In addition, the Human Resource Community is working with United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) to become a partner as an employer for persons interested in obtaining a quality civilian job after serving in the Army.

Career Opportunities and Advantages for Veterans as an Employee

The Human Resource Community supports employees who are veterans throughout the employment lifecycle, including; placement, promotion, and retention of veterans. In an effort to make the State government a model employer for employing veterans, it is important everyone in state government work together towards this goal.

Following are career opportunities and advantages given to employees who are veterans.

- **Career Opportunities.**

Veterans preference is given

- ✓ Promotional, Reinstatement, Transfer, and Layoff actions.

- **Advantages.**

- ✓ For retirement purposes, an employee who has prior military service under honorable conditions may purchase additional public service credit up to six years.
- ✓ Some agencies allow employees to go from full-time to part-time to continue their education using their GI Bill, and return them back to full-time service when it is requested by the employee.
- ✓ Agencies will provide veterans the assistance they need to obtain treatment for anger management due to combat trauma.

Future Initiatives

The Human Resource Community plans to:

- In cooperation with the Department of Commerce create a “Military Skill Translator” tool for veterans to use in matching their MOC with the State of Kansas classification titles to assist in locating potential jobs.
- Develop new procedures to better track the demographic data on veterans.
- Work with Job Alliance to add the State’s Notice of Vacancies to the national list of job vacancies.
- Enhance the training for the Department of Commerce Veteran Representatives on new initiatives, determining veterans’ preference, and other human resource management issues that will relate to veterans.

What Other States Are Doing?

A survey of other states was done to learn what they are doing as initiatives to employ and retain veterans. The survey results showed that Kansas is a leader in its support of the veterans. The survey showed only Pennsylvania requires the veteran to be hired if the veteran passes their state's merit system examination and is one of the top three applicants interested in the vacant position. The other states that respond to the survey generally provide 5 points (veterans) and 10 points (disabled veterans) to the veteran's final score in the ranking of applicants and retaining veterans; and veterans are only given an interview if they are near the top of the rankings. The State of Kansas requires the veteran who meets minimum requirements for the classification to be interviewed.

Other state initiatives:

- **New York.**
Sets aside 300 positions that must be filled by disabled veterans.
- **Wisconsin.**
Maintains a list of positions into which disabled veterans can be hired without competition.
- **Virginia.**
Established a Veteran Outreach Council which works to enhance the exchange of information between veterans and state agencies that will facilitate the employment of veterans.
- **Several States.**
 - ✓ Provide veterans preference to eligible relatives - as a surviving spouse of a deceased or disabled veteran; spouse of a disabled veteran who is unable to work due to his/her disabilities; dependants of a deceased veterans; and other categories' of eligible relatives.
 - ✓ Working towards providing information to agencies in hiring veterans. This includes establishing web presences; providing reports on veteran demographics; informing agencies of federal veterans outreach programs; and developing a list and maintaining applications of disabled veterans for the hiring agencies.